

H7N9 Bird Flu Cases In China Rise To 104; Deaths At 21

The number of confirmed H7N9 bird flu cases in China increased by two to 104 during the 24-hour period through 4 p.m. on Monday, according to the official Xinhua news agency. Twenty-one of the sick have died.

The two new cases were in Zhejiang Province, which has in recent days surpassed Shanghai with the most cases with 40 versus 33.

More than 40% of the H7N9 cases involve victims that have not handled poultry, state media said. However, authorities at the same time have said there has been no confirmed person-to-person transmission of the flu. “Our knowledge of H7N9 bird flu is very limited,” the Shanghai Daily newspaper quoted Yang Weizhong, deputy director the Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as saying today.

Beijing and major eastern Chinese cities have closed live poultry markets and are taking other precautions to limit the spread of the new virus. Fujian Sunner, a large chicken process that supplies Yum!’s KFC chain and McDonald’s, said today it lost 78 million yuan, or about \$13 million, in the first quarter, harmed in part by fallout from the spread of H7N9 bird flu. Consumers have been wary of chicken, even though the government says cooked meat is safe.

Chinese-language media last week estimated that the country’s poultry industry has lost 17 billion yuan, or \$2.7 billion.

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